



INITIATIVE for
SOLIDARITY WITH
TURKEY'S
INTELLECTUALS

NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER 1985

THOUSANDS GIVE RUHI SU A FITTING BURIAL

No other two names can epitomize the vibrant, almost heady years of social awakening in the 1960's and then the later 70's as those of Nazim Hikmet and Ruhi Su. The poet and the songmaker (who set to music many of Nazim's poems) inspired and nourished a whole generation - rather several generations - of young people, who found through them and in them, both a coherent social and cultural identity and their own voice. If one ranks today Nazim Hikmet (1902-1963) with Pablo Neruda, Ruhi Su was not unlike Paul Robeson, Athahualpa Yupanqui or José Afonso, with his proud and unadorned interpretations of old folk songs and in the way that many of his songs came to indissolubly linked with certain periods or events in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Ruhi Su had endured many hardships in his life for being a committed believer in democracy, social equality and human rights (see short biography). He died a martyr, because the junta chiefs refused him a passport until it was too late.

Therefore it was fitting that tens thousand people from all over the country turned up at his funeral, on the 22nd of September. They were not only paying him homage on his last journey. In his death, Ruhi Su had given them the courage that while he lived, he had inspired with his songs. The ten thousand defied police barricades set up around the mosque where the religious service was held, and insisted on marching after him to the cemetery.

(cont'd)

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH RUHI SU

The refusal of the regime in Turkey to grant a passport to Ruhi Su (with no justifications given) prompted protests and solidarity messages from all over the world. In April 1985, in Germany, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Siegfried Lenz, Günter Walraff Wolf Biermann and Ingeborg Drewitz sent a letter to prime minister Turgut Özal, urging him to expedite Ruhi Su's traveling to Germany, where several clinics and doctors, among them Dr. Lotz of the Lower Saxony State Hospital, had stated their readiness to take over his treatment.

Aziz Nesin (President of the Writers Union; see this issue for his defense in the "Intellectuals' Trial"), in a speech made at the funeral, said, "It was only after the 'authorities' were bombarded with letters from artists, scientists, intellectuals from all the civilized countries, that they finally had to issue him a passport. But by then he was already on his way to his final destination. He died with his passport. Let that unused passport be well preserved. Generations after us should see that passport in the museum to understand and appreciate our time."

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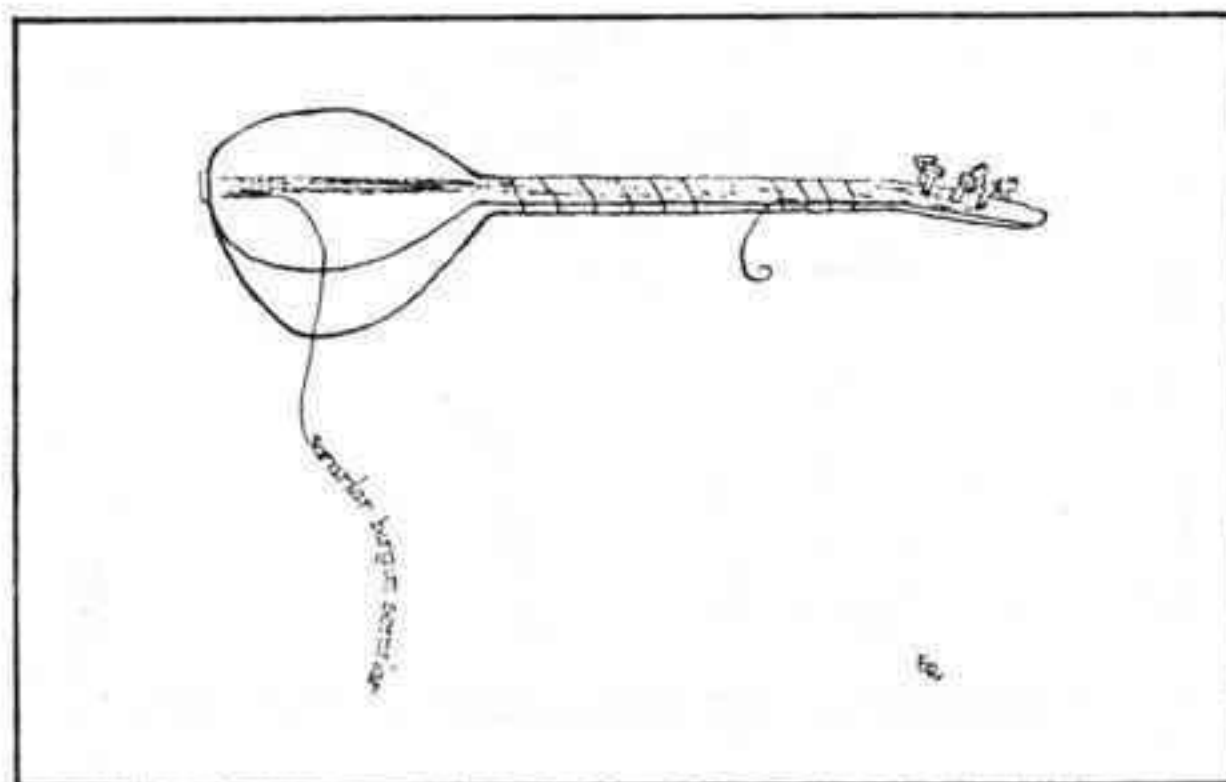
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RUHI SU's funeral, cont'd..

They marched towards the cemetery, singing snatches of his songs they knew so well. The police intervened again, to be met with cries of "Ruhis do not die!"

The police arrested 162 people. Held in custody in the Police Headquarters in Istanbul, where they were interrogated, they were only released on the 7th of October.

Ruhi Su, however, had won his last contest. His funeral had been the largest mass demonstration against the oppression and obscurantism of the regime, since the coup. From opposition party leaders to leading artists, writers and students, as well as thousands of workers, the people had once again found their voice with him.



'One day they will ask...'

RUHI SU (1912 - 1985): A Short Biography

Having lost his parents at a very early age Ruhi Su was raised in an orphanage. He attended the gymnasium in Adana, then the Music Teachers' College in Ankara, and finally the Ankara State Conservatory, which he graduated in 1942. There followed brilliant performances in the Ankara State Opera.

Meanwhile Ruhi Su had developed an interest in folk music, and between 1943-45 he sang folk songs for the Ankara, and after 1950, for the Istanbul radio.

In 1952, as part of a widespread witch-hunt, he was fired from the state opera. The same year he was charged with being a member of the Communist Party of Turkey, arrested, tortured and convicted to five years in jail. Upon his release, he served a further 20 months in exile in a far away town. His ordeal was not yet over. Blacklisted for many years, he was able to get small jobs making music for certain films, and finally started to perform in a locale in Istanbul in the 60's.

Over the years Ruhi Su built up an enormous collection of thousands of folk songs. He came to know almost all of the traditional folksingers of his day. By 1984, he had made 16 singles and 11 long play records. What is more important, he not only came to preserve and relay, to an essentially urban audience, the heritage of a rich folkloric tradition, but with his cultivated but simple interpretation, he breathed a new life into old forms, wresting from them a contemporary relevance. Meanwhile he also set to music the lyrics of traditional as well as contemporary poets.

Ruhi Su wrote poetry as well. These were published in Varlik and Degirmen (literary journals) in the thirties, and in the daily Cumhuriyet between 1977-79.

In the late 1960's and 70's he gave many concerts both at home and abroad. In 1975, he founded, with Sümeyra, his student and folk singer in her own right, a chorus (Dostlar Korosu) and gave choral performances. His works were broadcast on many radio programs from Argentina to Sweden, but the air waves of his own country were deaf to his music except for a very short spell in the 70's.

DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH TURKEY'S INTELLECTUALS AND

PROF. TANILLI'S STATEMENT

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the military coup of 12 September 1980 in Turkey, a group of outstanding personalities from all over the world have declared their solidarity with the intellectuals in Turkey, and voiced their support for a sustained solidarity initiative. The text of the Declaration, with the list of signatories, and Prof. Server Tanilli's statement on behalf of the Initiative for Solidarity with Turkey's Intellectuals, appear below.

DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY WITH TURKEY'S INTELLECTUALS

"... WE HEREBY DECLARE OUR FULL SOLIDARITY WITH WRITERS, ARTISTS, JURISTS OR SCIENTISTS IN TURKEY WHO ARE BEING PERSECUTED FOR 'CRIMES' THAT, HAD WE BEEN IN TURKEY WE WOULD VERY PROBABLY HAVE COMMITTED OURSELVES..."

Five years have passed since the military takeover in Turkey on the 12th of September 1980. Since then, democratic rights and freedoms have either been abrogated altogether or are under constant threat in the name of combating terrorism. The freedom of thought, freedom of the press and the freedom of association have been suppressed. Educational institutions, including the universities, have been turned into barracks. Intellectuals face being declared "guilty," losing their jobs, imprisonment or even torture, for their thoughts, or what they are alleged to be thinking. Arts and sciences are trammelled by arbitrary and brutal measures.

Under these conditions, it is impossible to speak of a democratic regime in Turkey, all claims of "return to democracy" notwithstanding.

We hereby declare our full solidarity with writers, artists, jurists or scientists in Turkey who are being persecuted for "crimes," that, had we been in Turkey, we would very probably have committed ourselves.

We demand that all cases involving "crimes" of thought and the press be dropped, that all persons being held under arrest on such charges be freed and that all curbs on the freedoms of thought, press and association be lifted.

We, the undersigned, refuse to be part of the conspiracy of silence surrounding the brutal repression of our colleagues in Turkey and we call upon intellectuals all over the world to join their voices to ours. To this end, we welcome and endorse the efforts to found an Initiative for Solidarity with Intellectuals in Turkey.

Bibi Anderson - film actress (Sweden)

Amar Bentoumi - General Secretary of the International Union of Democratic Jurists (Algiers)

Noam Chomsky - linguist, Nobel Laureate (USA)

Julie Christie - film actress (Britain)

Pieter Dankert - former President of the European Parliament (Holland)

Ingeborg Drewitz - writer (Germany)

Max Frisch - writer (Switzerland)

Costa Gomes - former President of the Republic (Portugal)

Anker Jorgensen - former Prime Minister, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (Denmark)

Yannis Ritsos - poet (Greece)

Salman Rushdie - writer (Pakistan)

Dora Russel - Bertrand Russel's widow (Britain)

Antoine Sanguinetti - retired Admiral (France)

Otto Schily - member of parliament, from the Greens (Germany)

Alain Tanner - film director (Switzerland)

Mikis Theodorakis - composer (Greece)

Per Westberg - President of PEN International (Sweden)

Susannah York - film actress (Britain)

Jean Ziegler - sociologist (Switzerland)

PROF. SERVER TANILLI'S STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE
INITIATIVE FOR SOLIDARITY WITH TURKEY'S INTELLECTUALS

(12 September 1985, Bonn)

The period starting with the 12 September coup has completed its fifth year. As stated in the Petition of the Intellectuals, we have witnessed in our country within the space of these five years, the estrangement of democracy from its own values and institutions; measures and practices in violation of the supremacy of law have become the rule rather than the exception, and the freedom of thought, of expression and the freedom to organize have been effectively abrogated. The restructuring of the whole educational system, starting with the universities, along anti-democratic and unscientific lines, the reduction of the radio and television to instruments of state propaganda, and the legislative and de facto constraints imposed upon all forms of artistic creation, have led to a rapid erosion of cultural life.

The intellectuals of Turkey have struggled to fulfill their responsibilities in the face of censure, bans, investigations, trials, sackings, imprisonment and even torture. Authors, cartoonists, musicians, film and theater artists, painters, lawyers, engineers, teachers, scientists have continued to defend the common values of mankind, the cultural heritage of our people; they have defended light in the face of darkness. Although almost all of their organizations have been disbanded, they found ways to get together and raise their voices.

Their defiant persistence is a source of inspiration for us intellectuals living abroad, and our colleagues, in meeting our responsibilities. It becomes even more urgent every day to bring to the attention of world public opinion, the struggles, grievances, demands, of our country's intellectuals, and to strengthen the bonds and the solidarity between them and their colleagues all over the world. On the other hand, the need for a sustained and systematic effort to forge the intellectual, artistic, educational and scientific endeavors of our compatriots living abroad into a more effective weapon for democracy at home, also grows.

The Initiative for Solidarity with Turkey's Intellectuals, uniting around these common ends, intellectuals from Turkey living abroad and their colleagues from all over the world, will try to meet this demand. The activities that have been continuing since the signature campaign conducted for solidarity with the 1256 signatories of the Petition of the Intellectuals, and endorsed by 3,300 colleagues from 12 countries, are evolving towards a single, forceful voice in solidarity with Turkey's intellectuals as a whole.

We call upon all our colleagues to join us in this effort. We gratefully thank all the intellectuals of the world who have come to our support, for their help and friendship.

* The London based Solidarity Committee for Freedom of Art, Science and Expression in Turkey, has circulated the Declaration of Solidarity among intellectuals in Britain. The signatures that have reached us to this day are : Juliet Stevenson, Andy de la Tour, Margaret Drabble, Maria Tolly, Alan Plater, Ken Follet, Miriam Karlin, Pam Gems, Constance Cummings, Tom Robinson, C. Dunn, Rik Mayall, Howard Brenton, Frankie Armstrong, Victoria Wood, Ben Kingsley, John Williams, Alan Brownjohn, Evan Parker, Matthew Kelley.

THE TRIAL OF THE INTELLECTUALS

On the 15th of May 1984, a delegation on behalf of 1256 intellectuals submitted a six-page petition to the President of the Republic of Turkey and the Speaker of the Parliament, voicing their "Opinions and Demands in relation to a Democratic Regime in Turkey."... They were promptly accused of treason by President Evren, in a televised speech. The Ankara Martial Law Command ordered an investigation against the petitioners for the infringement of Act No. 2969 prohibiting the criticism of deeds, measures and practices of the military regime in the post-12 September period.... The investigation culminated in a court case against 59 of the petitioners, which started being heard on 17 August 1984. They were indicted, however, with infraction of martial law orders, rather than the previous charges, firstly because it had become very difficult to convict them on account of Act No. 2969, once they had been publicly "charged" with treason, and secondly, because a public discussion of the contents of the petition had to be avoided at all costs. The trial has now reached the stage where the defendants are making their cases.

We are here publishing excerpts from the last statements for defense by some of the defendants, made at the Military Court No. 1 of the Ankara Martial Law Command.

AZIZ NESIN

The chief defendant in this trial, Aziz Nesin, at 71, is certainly the greatest master of satire in the Turkish language. His works have been translated into 36 languages and he has received many national and international prizes. He is also President of the Turkish Writers' Union.

.....
We owe thanks to those who have brought this case against us and those who have inspired them to do it, on several counts. It is only thus that we have recovered our right to defend ourselves, whereas in our country where officials claim a return to democracy, our right to defend ourselves had been in effect abrogated, our right to answer the meanest accusations, denied. Even though a censure might be imposed upon our defense here, thereby making it impossible to reach the public, we at least will have delivered our defence, by means of this court, to the hands of history. Besides, since we do not constitute an organisation, we lack the means to disseminate the text of our petition. But the attacks launched against us in the broadcasts of the Turkish Radio and Television, and the press coverage of the court hearings, have to a certain extent made up for this deficiency.

● ● ● Notwithstanding the claims of a return to democracy, it has not yet been possible for me to obtain a passport so far. My intention is not to complain of my own plight. I am not the only person in Turkey who is not able to obtain a passport. Thousands of people have been denied passports without any legal grounds whatsoever; our beautiful country has thus been turned into a vast prison. The military

regime has caused endless suffering by trying, imprisoning, convicting people for actions that had taken place many years ago, and which were not 'crimes' at the time.

On the other hand, the same military regime has passed an Act No.2969, which prohibits even the criticism of actions taken by the military regime from the 12th of September 1980 up to the elections on the 6th of November 1983.

Laws must, above all, be in accord with logic and reason. That those, who prosecute people for acts committed ten, fifteen, even twentythree years ago, and which were not infringing upon any law at the time, should prohibit even the criticism of their actions today defies both logic and reason, and I think I am in possession of my reason. ● ● ●

For the first time in the history of a republic, the process of destruction of institutions has started with this administration. While even the Sultans needed the fetwa of the 'Seyhulislam', in our day the institution of political association has been destroyed at its foundations, political parties closed down, their presidents exiled, accused of grave deeds in broadcasts of the Turkish Radio and Television, without being given a chance to defend themselves, without a

court, even a special court, verdict, and without any legal grounds whatsoever. Moreover all the property of these political parties has been seized. Although I am not a member or even a sympathiser of any of these parties, and even am opposed to them at an intellectual level, the fact that we were denied even the means of voicing our reaction to the injustices committed against them has bothered our consciences immeasurably.

Trade unions and their officials have also been gravely accused and humiliated without being given the possibility to defend themselves, and all their property and real estate has been confiscated. I would like to underline what this means. Unlike the belongings of certain institutions, acquired on government funds, these were the property of workers, built with their own sweat...

• • •

One of the most important institutions that has been torn down is the University in Turkey. This institution has been successfully destroyed from its foundations by means of the Higher Education Act. So much has been said on this subject, and so little attention has been paid to what has been said that I do not want to add anything new to this discussion. I would just like to stress the huge damage that is done by the scientific and cultural mediocrity and enmity to investigative thinking fostered by the Higher Education Act and the Council of Higher Education...

• • •

Turkey is living through a period of its history where, in the hands of administrators with a minimal cultural level, corruption has reached unattainable heights. Since three days, the daily *Milliyet* has been demanding to know who has received the 12 billion 500 million lira bribe paid by the United States to secure the purchase of the F-16 fighter bombers. That this bribe has been paid is affirmed by the American who has done the bribing. Turkish intellectuals know very well why the sale in Turkey of a certain issue of *Time* magazine has been prohibited, and what was written in this issue.

At a time when bright young men become multi-millionaires in a space of three to four years, when sinking banks or companies are rescued by a benign state, if one considers the fact that the salaries of government employees or the minimum wage are determined by the IMF, it becomes clear that it is a duty of our intellectuals to concern themselves with economic matters.

Your Honor! We have a lot to say. I will cut myself short without having been able to say even a hundredth of what I ought to say. Nevertheless, I would like to briefly touch upon the subject of human rights and capital punishment.

Two of the greatest writers of our age have come to visit our country: Arthur Miller and Harold Pinter. Our administrators hardly took notice of the fact. The cultural level of the administrators under a Prime Minister who had stated in an interview that he did not read anything other than western comics, could not have been expected to rise to the occasion. The press conference held by these two writers just before their departure from Istanbul was placed under a news blackout. Although the political police hunted these famous writers everywhere, and even asked their whereabouts of Turkish journalists, at this point they had already boarded their plane and therefore no proceedings could be brought against them. These two writers have published in newspapers abroad, with circulations that number in the millions, much broader accounts of their impressions than those expressed in the banned press conference. I would have liked to see the Turkish readers reading these articles.

Especially our administrators. I am quoting from Arthur Miller's article which appeared in the *Nation* on the 18th of May, 1985: "...some observers, including Suleyman Demirel, the Prime Minister at the time of the coup, find it suspicious that although seemingly helpless to curb the violence for two years, the military brought an amazing peace within a matter of weeks after taking power. In Demirel's view, the generals deliberately allowed the chaos to expand until their intervention would be gratefully accepted. Support for the military government is still based on fears that the violence will return."

There are many in Turkey who share the suspicion voiced by Suleyman Demirel to Arthur Miller. I am one of them... Whereas all of us are to a certain extent responsible for all that happened, for those who were most responsible to think that they render justice by hanging children who have committed crimes when they were seventeen or eighteen years old, is an abomination. These words of Gen. Evren, addressed to the intellectuals in the West, by means of the radio and television and the press, are extremely interesting: "They oppose the executions. This is our business. Do we criticise them for not holding executions?"

A lot has been said on the pros and cons of capital punishment throughout history, but it had not occurred to anyone to defend it in this way.

The President considers it an index of democracy that no special courts have been set up. He forgets that Atatürk had set up special courts under the name of 'Courts of Independence'. People have been deprived of their freedom and their rights by medieval means, without even the benefit of a special court hearing. The creation of special courts would have been much better. I am a writer directly opposed to the policies of Suleyman Demirel. I am not an opponent of Ecevit, but I am not a supporter, either. The accusations directed against these two party leaders, among others, without any legal basis, in a completely arbitrary way; the fact that they were punished without being given a chance to defend themselves, has disturbed me deeply as an enlightened citizen and made it imperative that I undertake the Petition initiative.

What is a hallmark of anti-democratic regimes? Book burning! Hundreds of thousands of books are being burned in Turkey without even a court order. Not even an investigation has been conducted against these books. Is this what they call democracy. In Turkey, a motion picture film has been burned. A film made for the Radio and Television network and which had cost millions. Is this what they call democracy?

I would just like to touch upon the most important topic of torture.

Torture means causing someone excessive physical or psychological distress. The horrible tortures practiced since the 12th of September 1980 have been documented by responsible officials. When the Act No.2969 prohibiting the criticism of this period is lifted, it will become clear, with the uncovering of these tortures, that crimes to disgrace our century have been committed. All these aside, let us just mention the 'lightest' and yet most humiliating of these tortures: is there any one who can deny that during interrogations, the defendants are blindfolded?

I am cutting short my words for lack of time.

While I write this, I do not know whether I will be allowed to read it in court or not. However I have written it on the assumption that I will be allowed to do so. This statement is not only for the court and the prosecution. I wish that those who really ought to read it will, and benefit from it.

I would like to thank those who have brought this case against me, and those who have let me speak here thus giving me a chance to say even the few things I have been able to say.

Respectfully,
AZIZ NESIN.

This statement for the defense by Aziz Nesin was placed under a press ban, and could not appear in Turkey. A pamphlet including more extensive passages (in English) and the whole text of the statement, in Turkish, are available upon request from the mailing address of the Initiative. Excerpts in German and French will also become available shortly.

PROF. DR. GENÇAY GÜRSOY

Prof. Dr. Gençay Gürsoy was relieved of his chair as professor of neurosurgery in the Caba Medical School, by the Martial Law Command of Istanbul in February 1983. (see article on Universities, this issue). Since then neurosurgery is not being offered to the students. Prof. Gürsoy continues to practice medicine, as well as publish articles in various journals.

"Your Honor!

"...First and foremost I would like to state that I am proud of being a defendant in this trial.... As I have already said in the testimony I gave before you on 15.8. 1985, I share to the letter, all the views expressed in the petition and the responsibility for all the stages of the process, from the penning of the petition to its being submitted to the concerned authorities.

"It does not concern me in the least, whether the text you are trying is a petition or declaration.. Your Honor, you know, and we know, that what is on trial here is our opinions."...

"I have already stated that we submitted our petition dealing with our opinions, observations and demands in relation to democratic rights and freedoms, to certain authorities....Let me frankly confess, that this ultimate step of our action chafed me and, I think, many of my friends, at least from an aesthetic point of view. This last step was for us, a sacrifice that we had to make for the future of our country.

"The Head of State Kenan Evren, in a speech he made at a time when the abolition of the death penalty in Turkey, as in other western countries, was being debated, said, referring to the hundreds of young people on death row, 'Are we then to feed them in our jails instead of hanging them?'

"I am deeply grieved to share not only the same geography, but even the same epoch, with these words, whoever it might be that uttered them.

"And we have submitted, on the 15th of May 1984, a petition dealing with our demands and wishes in relation to democracy, freedom and human rights, to the Office of the President of the Republic.

"I hope that Your Honor will be able to grasp the degree of self-denial that that has meant for us.

"On the 21st of May 1984, an investigation was launched against us. On the 28th of May, that is, even before we had been brought up for questioning, Head of State Kenan Evren, Honorary Doctor of Law of the university system created by this regime, accused us of treason.

"Your Honour, I truly would not like to have been in your place. It must be a difficult task to try a group of fifty-nine thinkers, artists, journalists, lawyers and scientists, who are accused by the Head of State of treason, and against whom the Prosecutor of the Military Court has only been able to bring the charge of having circulated a 'petition that was more like a declaration.'

"You must know, as I am sure does the Head of State, that among these 59 is to be found no one who has put his signature under agreements with superpowers that compromise the very independence and the future of the country; nor top-ranking bureaucrats who manage to come into the possession of huge shares in lucrative enterprises - in the names of their wives- and against whom no investigations are ever brought, although they may be implicated in international bribery scandals; nor successful businessmen who do not pay a cent of their tax dues, now in the billions, and yet the state does not even dare to name them; nor the authors of legislature or the measures that have brought about the ruin of the universities and caused irreparable damage to the scientific life of the country.

"Among these 59, are to be found artists, lawyers, scientists, thinkers, journalists, writers, who have proven their worth on a national and international level, who have suffered but not capitulated, and, Your Honour, who have been able to overcome, within human bounds, the affliction known as fear, which in these times, drives people to commit heinous crimes.....

"I have come across in the capacity of a physician, and after their release from prison, some of the young people who have gone through the tortures recorded in detail in the statement for the defense of my journalist friend Erbil Tusalp. I have come to know mothers, fathers, spouses, who lost their sons, brothers, loved ones, who, according to the official statements, had taken their own lives either during the interrogation or during incarceration. Among them (those I met) were people who

(cont'd on the next page)

*Dr. Gürsoy's statement for the defense,
cont'd..*

had long lost their confidence in justice, and who only sought to alleviate their suffering. I came to know Muzaffer Erdost, who witnessed his brother, his hands handcuffed behind his back, being beaten to death by the security forces of the state, and who is now trying to convert this pain into love.

"Whether charges have been brought against the perpetrators of these crimes, may or may not say something to the jurists, but to a physician, it says very little.

"Your Honour, as an intellectual and a physician, in this country where so much suffering has come to pass, I only find myself guilty in that I have not been able to do more than put my signature under this petition which you are now trying. Therefore the accusations of the prosecution do not mean much to me.

"I have signed this petition... as an intellectual of this country, with a sense of responsibility that some will never be able to comprehend, because I feel the necessity to concern myself with many things that are no concern of mine.

"I have signed this petition because I oppose and repudiate the establishment and institutionalization of a mode of life suspending the rights and freedoms of the individual and in direct conflict with the basic principles of a democratic system, under the threat of a return to the state of anarchy and terror reigning before the 12th of September.

"I signed this petition, as a person who has lost his closest friends and himself narrowly escaped death, in that series of inhuman murders, because I refuse to be forced to face such a choice.

"I signed this petition because I believed the authoritarian, repressive, bureaucratic, monolithic and anti-democratic structure that has been imposed on all educational institutions, first and foremost the universities, on labor relations, on trade unions and all professional organizations, to be one of the greatest misfortunes to befall our country. I signed this petition, in the belief that our country and our people possess an internal dynamic that will enable them to evolve and sustain the most mature example of democracy and freedom, and that the greatest difficulties can be surmounted with the least losses, only in the most developed democracies.

"Respectfully."
Gencay Gürsoy

DR. HALUK GERGER

Dr. Haluk Gerger, an outstanding young staff member at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the Ankara University, was dismissed from his post in November 1982, by the Higher Education Council, along with 200 other young scientists. He has since published a book, and several articles.

"Your Honour!"

"...I have taken an active part in all the various stages of the drafting, circulation, and finalization of the list of signatories of the petition in question... I see this as the natural outcome of my sense of responsibility for my country and my people, my loyalty to the ideals of democracy, freedom and the supremacy of law, and my love for my country. I believe that in availing myself of a constitutional right, I was also fulfilling a duty.

"Moreover, I must say that while in full knowledge of the strict legality of these actions, I was also aware of running a certain risk. I know that, throughout the centuries, being on the side of freedom, justice, and human rights, has involved certain risks. Especially during certain periods in history, in certain places, such a position has meant being prepared to face denunciation and injustices....

"...Certainly, true personal freedom and inner peace is not contingent on either time or place. A person at large, who is not free to express his opinions, or, as an individual, exercise his fundamental rights, is certainly not free. On the other hand, it is possible to be perfectly free and happy within the confines of four walls, rather than surrender one's soul to fear, violence, repression and threats, while at large. I consider this the price one has sometimes to pay for freedom, for a decent life becoming a human being...

"A prison sentence has been demanded for one of us, on the basis of what he said during his first testimony here in this court. A press ban has been placed on the statements for defense made during the previous hearing. All of these clearly show what difficulties beset our right to defend ourselves. If I cannot defend myself before the public, as a citizen respectful of the laws and this court, under the due legal guarantees, or if doubts have been cast on my ability to do so, then one of the important reasons, as far as I am concerned, for making a defense altogether, is no longer there.

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Dr. H. Gerger's statement for the defense,
cont'd...

"In view of all this, had I been merely defending myself here, I would not have exercised this right.

"However this trial is a political one, and I believe that we are not merely defending ourselves here. Let me say in all earnestness, that in making my defense, I do not harbour any personal qualms or requests. I am making a defense here, not for myself personally, but for my country, Turkey....

"....Command No.3 issued by the Ankara Martial Law Authorities on the 30th of December 1978 (N.B. that Ankara, as well as 20 other major towns were under Martial Law since December 1978) forbids 'inflammatory, divisive declarations inimical to the public order,' with the purpose of putting an end to 'acts of violence and provocations aimed at destroying the free democratic system of government and abolishing the basic rights and freedoms enshrined in the constitution.' (The constitution in question is the 1961 constitution in force in 1978.)

"We would like to ask: are we to be considered 'inimical to the public order, divisive and inflammatory' for having stated that 'our people deserve all the human rights recognized in contemporary societies and should enjoy them in their entirety,' and this, in the Republic of Turkey, in the last quarter of the 20. century?

"Is it 'inimical to public order, provocative..and threatening to the basic rights and freedoms' to say, 'constraints that prevent the uninhibited expression of the will of the majority are contrary to democracy...The aims of democratic constitutions, within the context of their historical developement, is to guarantee the rights and freedoms of the individual,' in the last quarter of the 20. century, in the Republic of Turkey?

"Or have destroyed the peace of the Turkish public, by having demanded that 'necessary measures be taken to put a complete stop to torture'?

"Shall the enlightened citizens of the Republic of Turkey, in the last quarter of the 20. century, be found guilty of 'provoking violence with the aim of destroying the democratic system of government and basic rights and freedoms' for having declared that the 'fundamental aim of any organized society is to guarantee irrevocably and in a manner which can never be tampered with, the right to life and a decent human existence. This is a natural and sacred right. However, for this right to become meaningful, it is necessary to be able to express ideas openly, to be able to follow these through, and be able to organize freely around them.'.....

"I ask for my acquittal..... in the name of the people of Turkey!"

"Respectfully,
Haluk Gerger"

PROF. DR. HÜSNÜ GÖKSEL

Prof. Dr. Hüsnü Göksel, cancer surgeon, faculty member at the Medical School of the Hacettepe University (Ankara) was a member of the delegation that submitted the petition to the Office of the President of the Republic. An internationally recognized oncologist, he received a 'reprimand' from the Higher Education Council, for having put his signature under the 'Intellectuals' Petition'.

.....

"Whether I receive the verdict 'guilty' or am acquitted at the end of this trial will make absolutely no difference for me personally. This is because I believe that whatever the outcome, I will emerge from this room with my head high and having fulfilled an honorable duty.....

"That I have taken an active role in drafting as well as delivering the so called 'Intellectuals' Petition', that I have committed all my resources and abilities to this undertaking, is not at all an accident, but in keeping with and the natural outcome of views and positions I have held so far...

"The motive that has forced me..(to act in this manner).. is my belief in democracy. And I believe that democracy only flourishes with the conscious will and participation of the governed. It is not an alms given by the rulers to their subjects.

.....

NEWSBRIEFS

. Teoman Evren, President of the Turkish Bar Association, said in a speech made on the occasion of the commencement of the juridical year, that the number of attorneys prevented from making a defense in the courts, thrown out of the court room by the presiding judge, brought under investigation or arrested, was rapidly increasing and that the situation was appreciably worse in the military courts. Teoman Evren said that this was an extremely dangerous development, and that such a humiliating situation was not reconcilable with the rights of the defense in any democratic country.

. Members of the executive committee of the Turkish Peace Association, serving heavy jail sentences since the 14th of November 1983, have been nominated for the Kennedy Human Rights prize.

. "Ayna" (Mirror), a film by the young Turkish director Erden Kiral, won the major prize in the film festival in Figueira da Foz in Portugal.

. The Istanbul Conservatory, up to now a Municipal institution, has been turned over to the Higher Education Council, the central body created by the military regime and charged with bringing all institutes of higher education into line. Municipal Council members from SODEP, the "Social Democratic Party" not yet allowed in the parliament, expressed their hope that a purge in the Conservatory would not follow this decision.

. The first reports on the Amnesty Bill being prepared by the Üzal government indicate that it totally excludes prisoners of conscience, and insofar as it concerns political terrorists, is written in such a way that only extreme rightists, members of the neo-fascist youth gangs (the "Graywolves") will be able to benefit from it. The Bill was finally prepared in response to the overwhelming popular demand for a comprehensive amnesty. On the other hand, the draft prepared by the opposition parties SODEP and the "Popular Party" (Halkci Parti), provides for a postponement of sentences up to ten years, in the case of crimes of conscience. The draft bill also includes a provision enabling workers or civil servants dismissed from their jobs by the Martial Law Commands, to return to their posts within 60 days.

. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has put a notice in the Official Gazette, to summon a high-school teacher to answer an inquiry against him for "adultery". It is stated that the said teacher could not be found at his address.

TURKISH AUTHOR GETS GERMAN INDUSTRIALISTS' PRIZE

Fakir Baykurt, well known novelist and short story writer, who has been living in Duisburg (West Germany) since 1978, has been awarded the Literary prize of the German Industrialists' Union for 1985. The prize went to Baykurt for his deep and compassionate treatment of the problems of Turkish workers in Germany.

Prof. Dr. Hüsnü Göksel's statement, cont'd.

"I wish that this Petition incident had never taken place. And that I had never had the impulsion to participate in it. In a country where democracy functions with all its rules and institutions, were a professor of surgery, a cancer surgeon, one who has devoted thirty years of his life to the treatment of the cancer of one particular organ, to submit a petition on democracy to the Head of State, he would be referred, not to a court, but to the psychiatric service. Alas, the intellectuals of developing countries must concern themselves with various problems of their respective countries. This obligation carries them outside of their particular area of expertise...

"....I am not here to defend my own self. Rather, I am here to defend... 'an honourable and worthy life' for everyone, which is among the principles of the United Nations. I am here to speak for a world, where 'human beings freed of fear and hunger shall have the freedom of speech and conscience,' a longing also voiced in the Universal Bill of Rights."

. A children's film of West German make, in which Ali Aykol appears in the leading role, has received the gold medal at the Gioffoni Film Festival in Italy.

. A group of musicians living and working outside of Turkey have made a joint recording, with the title, "What shall a Bullet do to a Song?" The recording, available in cassette form, is offered for sale with the provision that "it shall be a small contribution from the musicians to the struggle for human rights and democracy in their home country." Appearing in the recording are, Delal, Emekci, Gülistan, Heval and the Children's Chorus, Mehmet Koc, Melike Demirag, Nedim Hazar and "Yarinistan", Nizamettin Aric, Orhan Temur, Riza Aslandogan, Tahsin Incirci and the Kreuzberg Singers (Kreuzberg'li Dostlar) with Sema, Tülay German, Siwan Perver, Ufuk Adali. It costs 10 DM.

GOVERNMENT FIGURES ON TORTURE

. In answer to a question raised in the National Assembly, the government disclosed that since the military coup, 5,138 complaints of torture and maltreatment have been lodged, 2,052 investigations resulting from these complaints have been so far concluded, and 439 police officers and other officials have received various sentences. Considering that only a minority of torture victims are ever able to lodge a complaint, and that the authorities actively try to cover up such cases, these numbers give an idea of the scale of the practice of torture and directly contradict the government's claims that it is only a sporadic and exceptional occurrence.

Meanwhile, at a press conference held in Ankara, Cahit Talas, chairman of the Committee for Amnesty and Human Rights of SODEP (Social Democratic Party) declared that torture was a widespread practice in the prisons. Mothers of certain prisoners also participated in the press conference, and related the tortures, maltreatment, miserable health conditions, long isolation periods and visiting bans that their children had to face.

EKIN INC. COMES UNDER BAN

A joint stock company founded by 34 leading writers, artists and academicians, and whose necessary formalities were completed in July 1984, has still not been granted the requisite permission by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in order to start functioning. At a time when the banning of political parties, associations and trade unions has become fairly routine, the banning of a joint stock company is still something of a novelty.

The Founding Committee, which includes the more prominent signatories of the "Intellectuals' Petition" (see 'Trial of the Intellectuals', this issue), among them, faculty members dismissed from their posts by the Military Regime, others still performing their functions at the universities, experts in the private and public sectors, writers (like Aziz Nesin), renowned in Turkey and abroad and artists acclaimed by the Turkish public, describes the initiators of the undertaking as "intellectuals assembled under a single roof, eager and determined at any price, to enhance the generation and advancement of scientific knowledge." They also state, "It is our firm decision to subsist as an economically viable and developing establishment."

Among the activities to be undertaken by Ekin Inc., are the operation of a traditional coffee house, where books and magazines will be available, as well as lectures and conferences at a certain fee; the conduction of research, project preparation and feasibility studies, public opinion surveys; educational and training programs for labour unions and firms and commercial publishing.

In the letter dated 2 February 1985, of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the founders were told that they would not be granted permission to function because their founding articles did not include the aim of making profits. The articles were amended in a way that left no further possible grounds for objection, but the permission has still not been issued.

On the other hand, the foundation of "Ekin Danismanlik ve Bilar Inc." (Ekin Consulting and Research), with all the requisite authorizations, has been concluded on the 25th of June 1985. Having similar aims as Ekin Inc., it moreover plans to disseminate Turkey's art and culture abroad. very significantly, it also foresees "opening up research possibilities for scientists who have been deprived of this possibility otherwise."

The Initiative for Solidarity with Turkey's Intellectuals considers it a duty to support, as far as it can, all such scientific and cultural endeavors at home or abroad, and organizational efforts within these areas. We will continue to inform our readers about the latest developments.

PRISON SENTENCE FOR AUTHOR

Yalcin Küçük, co-defendant in the "Intellectuals' Trial" has received a one and a half year jail sentence for his book, For a new Republic. Küçük has already served a year of his sentence, since he was put under arrest in 15.2.1983, and released only on 4.1.1984. Associate Prof. Küçük was removed from his post at the Ankara Gazi University by the Ankara Marial Law Command in February 1983, and his request to be reinstated after the lifting of the Martial Law in Ankara has been turned down by the Council of Higher Education (see report on the universities, this issue).

ONE UP ON ORWELL - AND DARWIN

"...One should be very cautious when writing history- one never knows what will happen the next day!"

N. Aksit,
author of National History (text book)

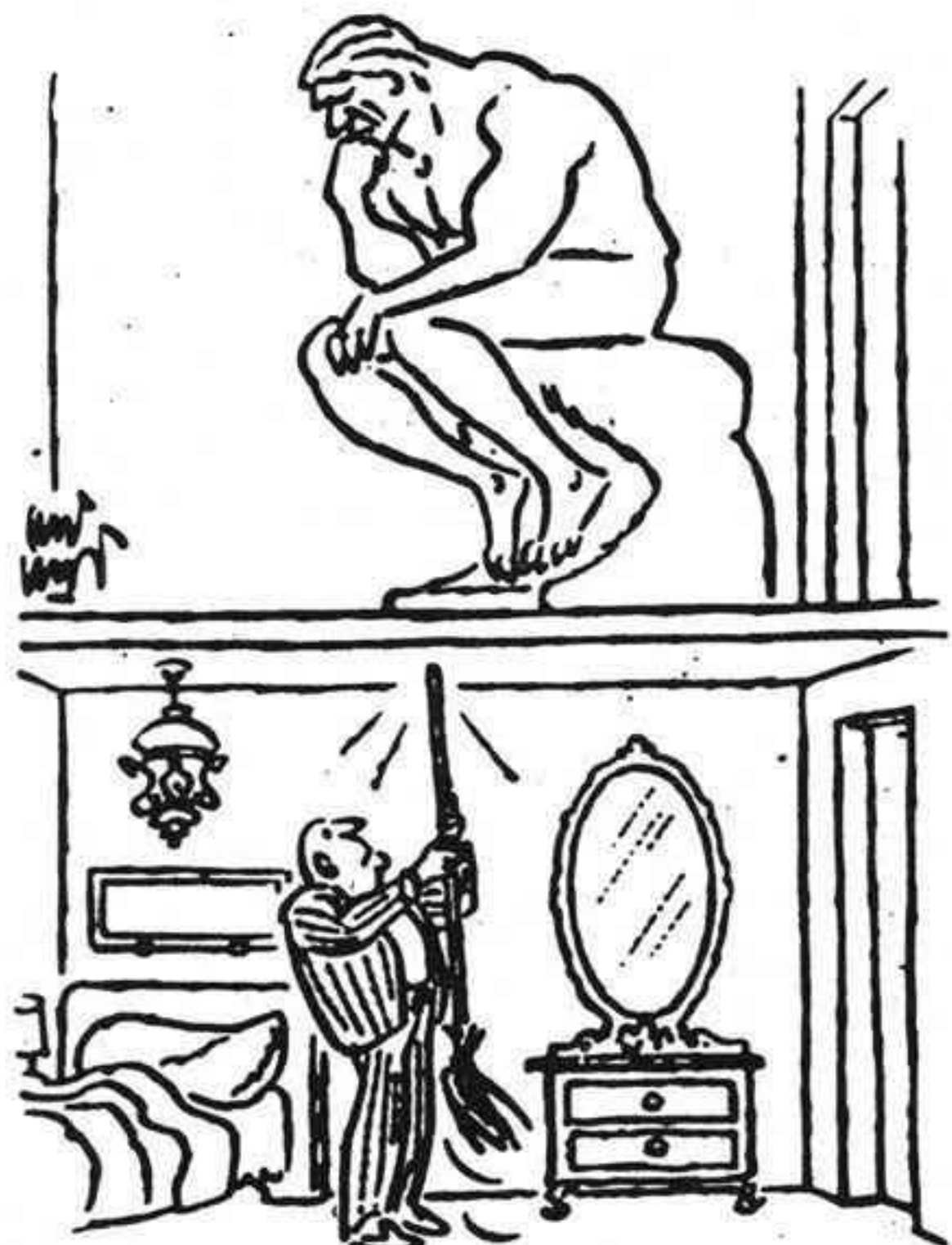
The Ministry of Education has launched a campaign of re-writing all textbooks for a total of 1275 different courses being taught in all the schools that come under the Ministry. Besides changing the titles of long established text books so that they now read National History, National Geography etc., the campaign involves such renovations as including a passage in a book on natural history that states that the evolution of species is only a theory that has not yet been proven, and that on the same footing as the "theory of evolution" one should also consider the "theory of Genesis."

The campaign, embarked upon last August, has not been able to catchup with all books however. Therefore, a series of brochures have been issued by the Ministry to indicate the changes that ought to be made in the existing books.

Meanwhile, these brochures include lists of words that ought to be avoided or replaced with other words. A similar list of "banned" words had recently been issued by the administrators of the Turkish Radio and Television network. These words are mostly Turkish words that have come into usage over the last twenty years instead of their Arabic equivalents, usually with democratic, egalitarian or progressive associations.

HIGHSCHOOL TEACHER FINED FOR LECTURING ON DARWIN

The regional administrative official of Banaz, a county in central Anatolia, has fined a highschool teacher for "indiscriminately lecturing on Darwinism and corrupting the minds of the youngsters" one tenth of his salary. (Cumhuriyet, 11 July 1985).



REPORT ON THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY

DISCIPLINE IS THE KEY WORD

One of the harshest attacks on the cultural life of Turkey since the 12 September 1980 coup, and probably the one with the most far-reaching consequences, has been the havoc wreaked with the higher education system. This campaign got under way with the passing of the Higher Education Act on the 6th of November 1981, over the protests of three thousand faculty members. The main feature of the new law was the creation of a central Council of Higher Education (CHE) with a chairman appointed by the President of the Republic, and equipped with vast powers including hiring and firing. The whole higher education system was reorganized following a strict hierarchy; all vestiges of autonomy and internal democracy, as well as academic freedoms were done away with. The key words in the universities under the new regime became "surveillance," "discipline," "duty," and "punishment." (For an actual word-count taken from the Higher Education Act, see Cumhuriyet (an Istanbul daily), 29.9.1985)

There have already appeared numerous articles in the western press on the large scale purges that came within a year of the passage of this law. By April 1984, the number of teaching staff that had either been dismissed from their jobs through the concerted efforts of the CHE and the Martial Law Authorities, forced to resign or ask for their retirement had reached 1,188 (at present the number has climbed to 1,300.). This number included 416 full and associate professors, 134 assistant professors and 638 assistants, out of a total teaching force of twelve thousand. (*) The drain from the universities has not stopped. It has now become routine, around October, for the "contracts" of further faculty members not to be renewed.

The Council of Higher Education, of which 8 members out of a total of 25 are nominated by the universities themselves, the rest being designated by the President of the Republic, the government and the military general staff (all are finally appointed by the President), sits at the apex of a pyramid, below which come the rectors, deans of faculties, chairmen of departments.. all appointed from above rather than being elected by their peers. This is above all a disciplinary hierarchy. The deans and rectors are responsible in the first degree to the CHE for the "supervision and control" of "personnel under them" and for conducting disciplinary investigations demanded by the CHE. The disciplinary organ is the so called Higher Education Supervisory Council, which comes under the CHE and which is again a motley of academic, beurocratic and military personnel. The barracks language unfortunately speaks of a grim reality, as Prof. Ernst E. Hirsch, who could be said to be one of the founding fathers of the Turkish universities in the thirties, has remarked (**). According to Prof. K. Liebe-Harkort. (Bremen University), who paid a visit last summer to Turkey and talked with many former and present faculty members, the monitoring of the staff and students extends into the classrooms, so that people run the risk of disciplinary action for things said or questions asked in class. The atmosphere is perhaps best symbolized by the police stations set up in all the university buildings.

The disciplinary "jurisdiction" of the CHE extends far outside the campus. This was graphically illustrated in the case of the eleven faculty members who had put their signatures under the so called "Intellectuals' Petition" (see this issue), who received

* Between December 1983 and April 1984, a Europe-wide solidarity campaign with the faculty members purged from the universities in Turkey tried to bring the ordeal of higher education in Turkey to the attention of academics and concerned institutions abroad. The press folder distributed at a press conference held on the 25th of April 1985, and including a list of faculty members who lost their jobs, may be obtained from the address of the Initiative for Solidarity with Turkey's Intellectuals, upon request.

** Wissenschafts-Recht, Wissenschafts-Verwaltung, Wissenschafts-Förderung, Vol 15, June 1985, Germany.

"reprimands", and subsequently three of them were dismissed from their posts.

The disciplinary "measures" at the disposal of the CHE include, besides the prevention of promotions and non-renewal of contracts, the power to transfer a faculty member from one department to another, at a different university or even a different town. Evidently, these "measures" do not result from any due process, no explanation has to be offered for them, nor can a defense be made. Since August 1984, foreign travel for the purposes of participating in scientific meetings has been made subject to the explicit approval of the CHE (besides the usual consent of the respective department and the security clearance), with foreseeable consequences.

In March 1984, "Personnel evaluation forms" were published, under which faculty members would be rated according to their "belief in the principles of Atatürk, and the capacity to unite those under (them) around such principles; the strength of (their) convictions to combat extremist ideologies and (their) spirit of national unity; family life; (their) and their spouse's moral convictions...". In December 1984 a circular from the CHE asked for files to be kept on the opinions, political leanings and the political leanings of close relatives of all faculty members, and for the "close surveillance" of those who had previously had "ideological activities."

Article 63 of the Higher Education Act, which calls for the academic promotions to be made on the basis of the personnel evaluation files, leaves little to be said for academic freedom in the universities in Turkey.

(cont'd)

LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER

Reproduced above is a letter sent in 1983 to the Chairman of the CHE and thence to all university rectors, by the prime minister at the time, Bülent Ulusu. In this letter, the rectors are asked to launch security investigations against staff members who "have apparently had a negative influence on the voting in the referendum for the constitution." Moreover they are asked that new staff members, as well as all faculty coming up for academic promotions, be subjected to security clearances, so that "those who hold negative attitudes, who might have become involved in various incidents without any material evidence against them," might be prevented from being promoted or from being appointed to administrative posts.

In keeping with this edict, this september, the names of the 369 candidates for the position of faculty dean in 123 faculties, all nominated by the already thoroughly screened university rectors, were kept secret due to the ongoing security investigation until the appointments were disclosed by the CHE.

GİZLİ

T.C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
Personel Genel Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 19-348-02929

/ 1984

Konu : Güvenlik Tahkikata

YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURULU BAŞKANLIĞINA

İLGİ: a) Genelkurmay Başkanlığının 19.1.1983 tarih ve İSTH: 7130-18-83/Hrk.Ş. sayılı yazısı.
b) Başbakanlığın 15.4.1982 tarih ve 19-383-06052-1982/31 sayılı kararı.

1. Genelkurmay Sıkıyönetim Koordinasyon Başkanlığının ilgi (a) yazısından:

- Dicle Üniversitesindeki bir kısım görevlilerin Anayasa Oylamasında kamuoyu üzerinde olumsuz etkilerinin olduğu,
- Birkısım Öğretim Üyelerinin geçmişte suç delili bırakmadan çeşitli olaylara karıştıkları,
- Bu şahıslarla ilgili bir suç unsuru bulunmadığından haklarında adli takibat yapılmadığı,
- Ancak menfi tutum ve davranışlarına rağmen bu personele kurum içinde üst yöneticilik veya ünvanlar verildiği anlaşılmıştır.

2. Bu nedenle; geçmişte suç işleyenlerin ilmi ve idari kademelerde yükselmelerini önlemek amacıyla Üniversitelere asistan alırken doçent veya profesör olmadan her kademede ayrı ayrı olmak üzere haklarında ilgi (b) genelgenin 3 ncu maddesinin (a) fıkrası gereğince ve Başbakanlık kanalıyla güvenlik tahkikatı yaptırılması uygun görülmüştür.

Bilgilerini ve gereğini arz ve rica ederim.

Bülent ULUSU
Başbakan

DAĞITILMAKTA:
Genelkurmay Başkanlığı
T.C. Başbakanlık Personel Genel Müdürlüğü

Bilgi:
Genelkurmay Başkanlığı
Başbakanlık Sıkıyönetim Koordinasyon Kurulu

Letter from the Prime Minister Ulusu

The Council of Higher Education is not just a specialized security arm of the state in the universities but is responsible for all aspects of academic life, has the power to make rules and regulations with the force of law and is practically answerable to no one besides the President. All administrative matters, from the organization of the various departments within the faculties to the matriculation requirements for the students are decided by the CHE. More importantly, the CHE is also empowered to decide such academic matters (besides promotions) as the course material to be taught in required subjects (in a Turkish university that essentially means all the courses).

The whole philosophy of the system is perhaps best summarized in the words of the spokesman for the CHE :*"Higher education is too important a matter to be left up to the universities."*

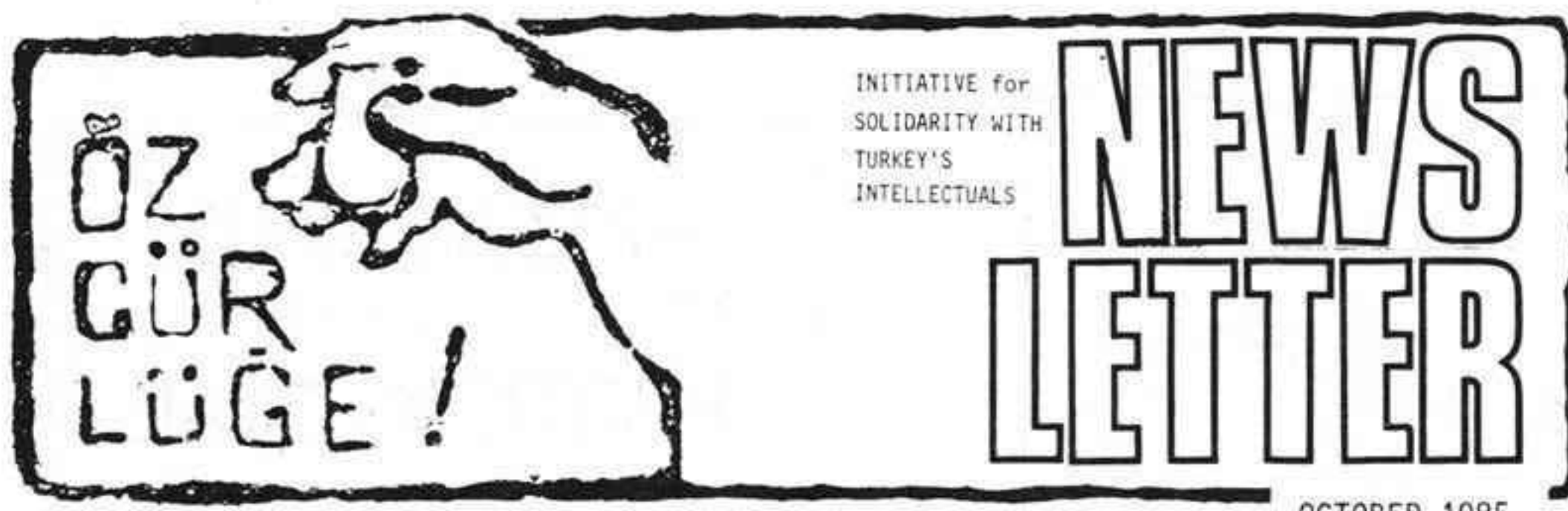
The quality of education and research, meanwhile, has suffered greatly in the hands of the CHE, notwithstanding the claims by the CHE-chief Dogramaci to the effect that the universities in Turkey have been turned into "centers of perfection."

The utter chaos created by the arbitrary, ill considered and hastily passed CHE regulations - which so far have seen 52 amendments, some of them within the space of a few days (the Higher Education Act itself has been amended three times) - and the total alienation of both faculty members and students from the universities under this autocratic system, have contributed greatly to this deterioration. The dismissal or resignation of so many qualified faculty members, which in some cases caused courses to disappear altogether from the curricula, and the hiring of hundreds of so called "research assistants" (in practice teaching assistants) with very poor qualifications, to fill the vacancies, especially in the relatively new and less developed universities - with eight new "universities" created by the CHE overnight from former teachers' colleges or professional schools adding to the staff shortage- have had dire consequences.

Besides indiscriminate hiring, new regulations lowering the academic standards to be sought before promotions and the conferring of academic titles by CHE "decree" (staff members at the teachers' colleges turned universities were made associate professors and professors, if they already had more than 8 or 15 years of service respectively) have given rise to what Dogramaci claims to be an increase in the number of faculty members, although in actual fact even in absolute numbers there is a slight decrease in spite of these gimmicks.(See Bilim ve Sanat, July 1984, Ankara Turkey.)

Indicators of academic performance by the students are similarly manipulated. In the Medical Schools the passing grade was lowered to 50% by decree. Moreover deans are under extreme pressure to catch up with "success quotas". Faculty members have been known to face questioning and reprimands in case too many students fail their exams. In other cases (Science faculties of the Ankara and Dicle Universities) deans are known to have personally "re-evaluated" exam papers. Although in the new system a huge emphasis is placed on passing a great many exams, and professors complain of being swamped by exam papers, the course contents are more and more diluted. Students on the other hand, from fear of stepping over the line, are anxious to reproduce exactly what has been said in the lectures.

Research in the universities has been all but extinguished. Besides the increased teaching load and the atmosphere of insecurity and alienation, one has to overcome such obstacles as the unavailability of scientific journals: individual departments can no longer order their own periodicals but the researchers have to go through a central documentation system. As a matter of fact, the total amount of money available for research funding has gone up, but the actual utilization of these funds has gone down in absolute terms since 1980. (see Nokta, 12.5.1983, Istanbul, Turkey.)



The Initiative for Solidarity with Turkey's Intellectuals aims to bring together intellectuals from Turkey now living abroad, around the common purpose of solidarity with intellectuals back home, and hopes to unite various individual undertakings in this direction. The nearly two thousand academics purged from the universities, the scores of trials facing writers, actors, publishers, the number of intellectuals already serving jail sentences for "crimes of thought" and the legal and administrative measures making the free expression of ideas, dissemination of works of art or scientific investigation all but impossible, call for a sustained and systematic solidarity effort.

One of the main tasks of the Initiative is to strengthen the dialogue between the intellectuals living and working in Turkey and their colleagues all over the world. It is clear that a steady and reliable flow of information on the repression facing those in Turkey from day to day, and their day to day struggles, is a *sine qua non* of this dialogue. This Bulletin aims to make a contribution, however small, towards filling this information gap.

The Bulletin will also try to cover major cultural events related to Turkey, as well as diverse solidarity actions, taking place abroad.

We count on you, on each of you, to make this Bulletin a vehicle for a lively exchange of news, information, documents, suggestions for concrete solidarity actions.

You can help defray the costs of producing and mailing this Bulletin by sending in your checks or money orders either to the address below, or directly to the bank account number: C.Weber, Spendkonto Initiative f. türk. Intellektuelle, BfG-Hannover, Kto. 12 26 22 02 01. BLZ 250 101 11.

Here is to FREEDOM!

* "Özgürlüğe!" (To Freedom!) - Design taken from a New Years' greeting by one of the leading painters and graphicists in Turkey and hand printed by his fellow inmates. Reproduced without the permission of the painter!

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